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denies that it was the result of his orders. The truth, however, must be known to many of the upper classes, though policy has dictated its concealment; and, indeed, there are allusions in the works of Russian authors which leave little room for doubt. Karamzin, the historian and poet, has a tolerably plain avowal of the fact in a poem which has been thus translated by Dr. Bowring, in his "Russian Anthology:"—

"Proud city! Sovereign Mother thou
Of all Slavonian cities now;
Work of seven ages!—beauty once
And glory were around thee spread;

Toil-gathered riches blessed thy sons,
And splendid temples crowned thy head;
Our monarchs in thy bosom lie,
With sainted dust that cannot die.

Farewell! farewell! Thy children's hands
Have seized the all-destroying brands,
To whelm in ashes all thy pride.
Blaze! blaze! thy guilt in flames be lost,
And heaven and earth be satisfied
With thee, the nation's holocaust!
The foe of peace shall find in thee
The ruined tomb of victory."

THE SEAL.

WITH the exception of the whales and their allies, the seals, perhaps, at first sight exhibit a greater departure from our ordinary idea of *beasts* than any other mammalia. Although still undoubtedly quadrupeds, their legs are so completely enclosed within the skin of the body, that nothing but the feet project, and of these, the toes are united by skin, so as to form fins or paddles, adapted almost solely for the propulsion of the animal through the water. The position of the hind legs, too, is very singular: they are turned completely backwards, so as to form a sort of broad double-tail fin, very similar, both in appearance and action, to the tail fin of the whale. But in these, as in the fore feet, all the parts existing in the most perfect quadrupeds are to be recognised; whilst the tail of the whale is really a fin, and has nothing whatever to do with the hinder extremities. As might be supposed from the form of the limbs, the seals are by no means at home on dry land; when out of the water they flounder about in rather an awkward manner, by a wriggling action of the belly assisted by the fore paws. But in the water the fish-like form of their bodies and their powerful paddles render them very active; and in this, their native element, they swim and dive with great rapidity, in pursuit of the fishes and other marine animals which constitute their general food.

The common seal (*Phoca vitulina*), which is found in most seas, but is especially plentiful on the Arctic coasts, is of a yellowish-gray colour, usually covered with dusky or blackish spots. Its usual length is about three feet, but it sometimes measures as much as five or six. It has a rounded head, somewhat resembling that of a dog, whence it has obtained the name of "the sea-dog." The eyes are very large, soft, and black, giving it a most intelligent expression of countenance; it has no external ears, but the orifices are furnished with a valve, which the animal can close when under water, so as to prevent the ingress of that fluid. These animals are common on some parts of the British coast, but on the coast of Greenland they exist in innumerable herds, in spite of the destructive warfare that has been waged against them for ages, both by the native Esquimaux and by Europeans. To the latter the seal-fishery, as it is termed, furnishes only two products, oil and fur; but so indispensable is the seal to the very existence of the Greenlander, that it has been said that the sea is his field and the seal-fishery his harvest. The skin of the seal, when deprived of the long and rather coarse hair which forms its outer coat, furnishes a soft downy fur of a light brown or fawn colour, which was formerly in considerable repute in England for making caps, great-coat collars, waistcoats, slippers, and similar articles of winter comfort; but it provides the Greenlander with the whole of his clothing; and to a people who depend so much on a seafaring life for their subsistence, its capability of resisting water is not one of its least desirable qualities. The oil, which is used in Europe only for burning in lamps, not merely serves this purpose amongst the Esquimaux of Greenland, but is also employed by them for heating their winter dwellings, and, strange as it may appear to European tastes, it likewise forms one of their favourite beverages. Mr. McCulloch, however, in speaking of the oil, says, that "when extracted before putrefaction has commenced, it is beautifully transparent, free from smell, and not unpleasant in its taste."

But every part of the seal is of importance to these people. The skin not only furnishes them with the warm clothing so necessary in their climate, but provides their boats and tents with a water-proof covering, and when tanned forms a strong and serviceable

leather for their shoes. The intestines are used to form windows, curtains for the front of their tents, summer clothing, shirts, and a number of other articles; the sinews furnish them with threads to sew them together; the bones are used as tools and for the heads of spears; and the flesh forms their most important article of food. This is said to be far more palatable than that of the whale, and the fried liver is said by Scoresby to be esteemed even by Europeans "as an agreeable dish."

In fine weather the seals are very fond of basking in the sun; and vast herds of them are often seen thus engaged upon the field-ice. In these situations, which are called "seal meadows," the hunters endeavour to surprise them while sleeping, so as to intercept their attempted retreat into the water, to which, as an asylum, they always direct their course when alarmed. They are generally destroyed by knocking them on the nose with clubs, a single blow being sufficient to despatch them. The European seal-fishery has been carried on almost entirely by ships sent out every spring from Hamburg and Bremen; and some of these have captured as many as four or five thousand in one voyage. The whalers, also, frequently take to sealing, probably to make up for bad success in their regular occupation.

In their character seals exhibit many amiable points. They are affectionate to their young; and the latter, in return, are said to be most dutifully obedient to their parents; and the males fight valorously in defence of their wives and families. In confinement, especially when taken young, they are easily tamed, and then exhibit much of the attachment of a dog for their master.

There are many other species of seals, all inhabiting the seas of different parts of the world, but delighting principally in the coasts of the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Some, indeed, are found in hotter climates; and one, the Monk Seal (*Phoca monachus*), represented in our illustration, is tolerably numerous in the Mediterranean. It bears a considerable resemblance in form to the common seal; but the toes of the hind feet are destitute of claws, and the animal sometimes attains a length of from ten to twelve feet. This seal is often carried about the continent of Europe in shows, and some extraordinary accounts are given of its docility; thus it has been said to pronounce words; and Aldrovand describes a specimen, probably of this species, which had been taught to utter a cry of pleasure whenever the name of a Christian prince was mentioned, but to remain perfectly still when the Grand Turk, then the terror of Europe, was named.

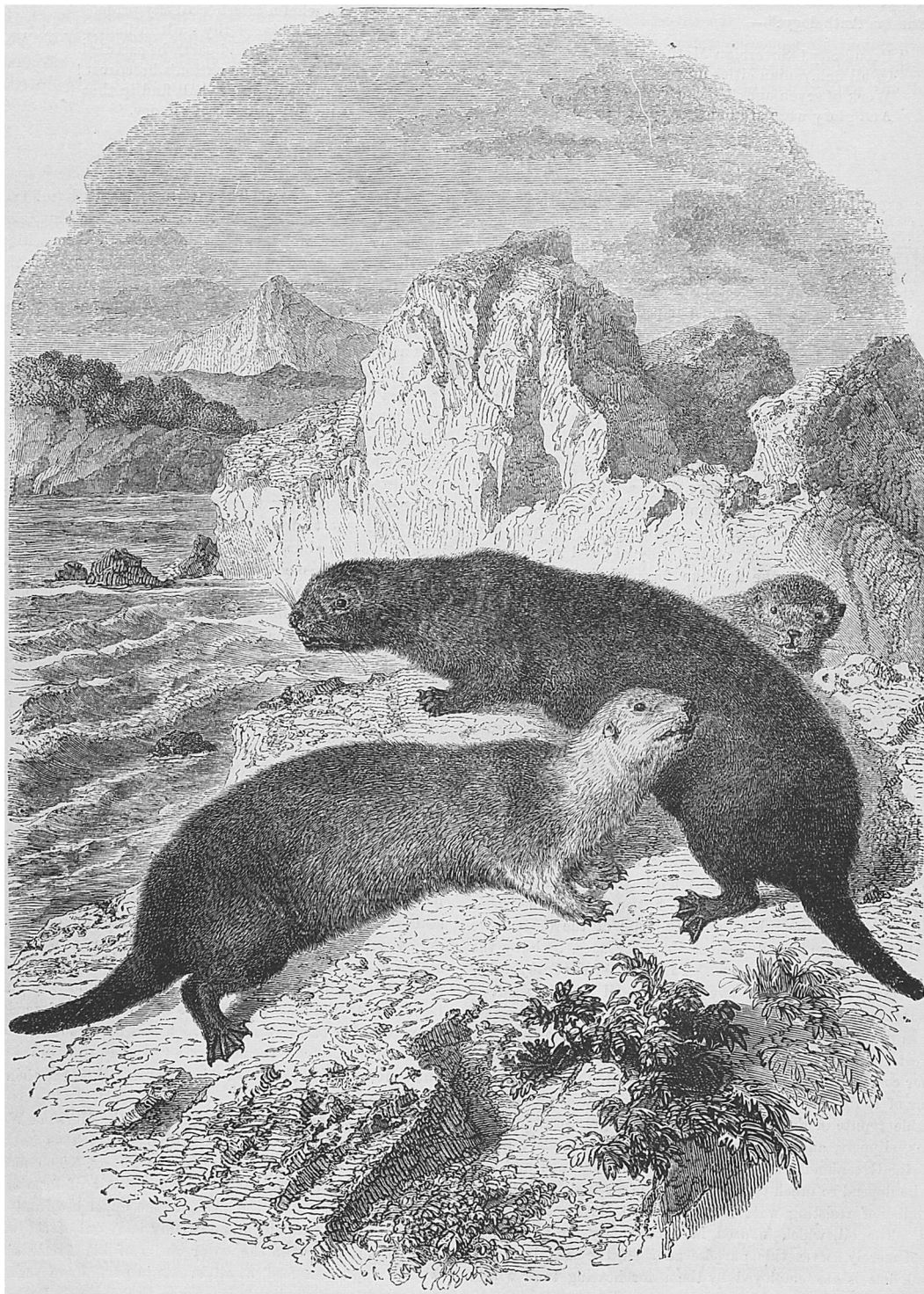
The largest of the northern species is the Morse or Walrus (*Trichechus rosmarus*), which is sometimes as much as twenty feet in length, and as thick in the body as an ox. The most striking peculiarity of this animal consists in a pair of formidable tusks, which hang down from the angles of the upper jaw, and are of great service to him in raising his unwieldy body out of the water, when he wishes to rest upon the ice or rocks of his Arctic abode. The walrus appears to feed, at all events in part, upon seaweeds; and a specimen, which lived for some time at St. Petersburg, was nourished on a sort of vegetable broth, of which carrots and other succulent roots formed an important part. The tusks of this animal furnish excellent ivory; and the subcutaneous fat or blubber yields a large quantity of oil; but the qualities of the meat are not so well ascertained, some voyagers describing it as excellent eating, when the prejudice arising from its dark colour had been overcome, while others have declared it to be so bad that even the dogs reject it with disgust. The walrus, which is also called the

Sea-horse, occasionally wanders to a considerable distance from its accustomed haunts ; and, according to Dr. Fleming, a specimen was shot in December, 1817, on the coast of Harris, in the Hebrides.

One of the southern seals, called the Fur Seal, *par excellence* (*Arctocephalus Falklandicus*), furnishes by far the greater portion

massacre was so indiscriminate—the mothers being killed before the young were able to shift for themselves—that the animals became nearly extinct.

Of the other species inhabiting the Southern Ocean, several attain a considerable size. One of the most singular is the Leonine Seal



THE MONK SEAL (*PHOCA MONACHUS*).

of the article known in Europe as seal's-skin. This species was formerly very common on the shores of the islands of the Southern Ocean, especially about the Falkland Islands, from which its name is derived. But in the course of a year or two, the avarice of Europeans destroyed as many as three hundred and twenty thousand of these animals ; thus defeating its own object : for the

or Sea Elephant (*Morunga elephantina*), the male of which has a curious appendage to the nose, resembling a proboscis, of about a foot in length. This seal, which lives in large herds on the shores of the islands of the Pacific Ocean, is often five-and-twenty or thirty feet long ; and as its fat furnishes a large quantity of most excellent oil, its pursuit has become of great importance.